

Message Text

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11

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 SAM-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /085 W

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R 220630Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9710

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY BANGUI

AMEMBASSY BANJUL

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

AMEMBASSY GABERONE

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KIGALI

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMCONSUL LORENCO MARQUES

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, TS, ET
SUBJ: ETHIOPIA BREAKS DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH TUNISIA

REF: A-18, FEBRUARY 19, 1975

1. ON JULY 20, TUNIS PRESS CARRIED NEWS ITEM REPORTING THAT ETHIOPIA HAD BROKEN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH GOT BECAUSE OF THE SUPPORT TUNISIA HAD GIVEN TO THE ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT (ELF). BREAKING RELATIONS INCLUDED AN EXPULSION ORDER FOR THE GOT CHARGE D'AFFAIRES IN ADDIS ABABA. CHARGE IS ALSO ACCREDITED TO OAU AND IS APPARENTLY IN KAMPALA ATTENDING OAU CONFERENCE. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS ACCOUNT, THE GOE ANNOUNCED THIS MOVE IN KAMPALA IN THE COURSE OF THE OAU CONFERENCE AND SPECIFICALLY LINKED IT TO AN ALLEGED GOT MOVE TO INVITE AN ELF OBSERVER TO THE CONFERENCE. AFP ACCOUNT OF GOE ACTION ALSO LINKED IT TO FACT THAT TUNISIA WAS THE ONLY ARAB MEMBER OF OAU TO SUPPORT ERITREANS AT THE ISLAMIC FON MIN CONFERENCE IN JIDDA.

2. GOT FOREIGN MINISTER HABIB CHATTI SUBSEQUENTLY RELEASED STATEMENT THAT GOT DEEPLY REGRETS ACTION OF ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT AND CHARACTERIZED IT AS EXCESSIVE. HE SAID THAT TUNISIA IS FIRMLY ATTACHED TO PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION AND THE NECESSITY OF GIVING PRIORITY TO DIALOGUE IN THE RESOLUTION OF PROBLEMS WHICH MAY ARISE BETWEEN NATIONS. THE ERITREAN TRAGEDY IS A SAD REALITY AND NO ONE CAN IGNORE ITS GRAVITY, HE ADDED. CHATTI NOTED THAT IT WAS IN THE SPITIT OF ENCOURAGING DIALOGUE THAT GOT HAD FAVORED INVITING AN

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ERITREAN REPRESENTATIVE TO OAU CONFERENCE. ADDRESSING QUESTION OF EXPULSION OF GOT CHARGE D'AFFAIRES IN ADDIS ABABA, WHO IS ALSO GOT REPRESENTATIVE AT OAU HEAD-QUARTERS, CHATTI SAID THAT IF A MEMBER OF THE OAU CAN-NOT HAVE A REPRESENTATIVE RESIDE AT THE SEAT OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR REASONS DEALING WITH ITS RELATIONS WITH THE HOST COUNTRY, THIS POSES A PROBLEM WHICH MERITS STUDY IN THE CURRENT OAU MEETING.

3. ETHIOPIA HAD NO DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVE ACCREDITED TO GOT AND TUNISIA, THEREFORE, IS NOT FACED WITH QUESTION OF EXPELLING ANYONE.

4. IN DISCUSSING THIS DEVELOPMENT WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS, SENIOR FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS HAVE EXPRESSED SURPRISE AT GOE ACTION. THEY HAVE EMPHASIZED TUNISIA'S LONG-STANDING SUPPORT FOR PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION, AND DEMONSTRATED CONSIDERABLE KNOWLEDGE OF ERITREAN-ETHIOPIAN CONFLICT.

5. COMMENT: GOT'S OPEN SUPPORT FOR ERITREAN SEPARATISTS APPEARS TO DATE FROM AN INTERVIEW GIVEN BY PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA TO THE VIENNA NEWSPAPER KURIER IN FEBRUARY 1975. IN CONTRAST TO NORMAL GOT POLICY OF KEEPING ITS HEAD DOWN ON INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL ISSUES DISTANT FROM IMMEDIATE TUNISIAN CONCERN, HE EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR SEPARATISTS IN THE CONTEXT OF APPROVING LIBYAN AID TO ELF. SINCE THAT TIME GOT HAS DEVELOPED CASE SUPPORTING SELF-DETERMINATION AND HAS APPARENTLY USED OPPORTUNITIES SUCH AS THE ISLAMIC FON MIN CONFERENCE IN JIDDA TO ADVANCE THIS CASE.

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